

AMENDED IN SENATE SEPTEMBER 12, 2001

AMENDED IN SENATE JULY 18, 2001

AMENDED IN SENATE JULY 9, 2001

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 31, 2001

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2001–02 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 1723

Introduced by Committee on Utilities and Commerce (Wright (Chair), Pescetti (Vice Chair), John Campbell, Canciamilla, Cardenas, Diaz, Jackson, Maddox, Nation, Papan, Reyes, and Wesson)

March 15, 2001

An act to amend Section 19325 of, and to add Section 19325.1 to, the Education Code, relating to the State Library, and making an appropriation therefor.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1723, as amended, Committee on Utilities and Commerce. State Library: telephonic reading systems.

Existing law authorizes the State Librarian to provide toll-free telephone services for registered patrons of the federally designated regional libraries for the blind and physically handicapped in order to enable those persons to have direct patron access to library services.

This bill would authorize the State Librarian to provide toll-free telephone access to telephonic reading systems for individuals with print disabilities who are registered patrons of the federally designated regional libraries for the blind and physically handicapped. The bill

would authorize the State Librarian to operate a telephonic reading system, as defined, or fund the operation of telephonic reading systems operated by qualifying entities, as defined. The bill would appropriate ~~\$2,000,000~~ \$830,000 from the California Teleconnect Fund Administrative Committee Fund to the California State Library to fund the 7 existing telephonic reading centers in specified cities, until July 1, 2002. The bill would require that any funds appropriated to the California State Library under the bill, which are not encumbered on or before July 1, 2002, revert to the fund.

The bill would make related findings and declarations.

Vote: ²/₃. Appropriation: yes. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:
- 3 (a) Thousands of California citizens have disabilities that
4 prevent them from directly accessing conventional print material
5 due to visual impairments, dyslexia, and orthopedic disabilities,
6 which prevent the physical manipulation of print materials.
- 7 (b) For decades there have been governmental and nonprofit
8 organizations dedicated to providing access to reading materials
9 on a wide variety of subjects by way of Braille, large print, or audio
10 tape recordings.
- 11 (c) Access to time-sensitive or local or regional publications,
12 or both, is not feasible to produce through these traditional means
13 and formats.
- 14 (d) Lack of direct and prompt access to these materials, such as
15 newspapers, magazines, newsletters, broadcast media schedules,
16 and other time-sensitive materials has a detrimental effect on the
17 educational opportunities, literacy, and opportunity for full
18 participation in governmental and community forums by people
19 with print disabilities.
- 20 (e) The California State Library, through the leadership of
21 State Librarian Dr. Kevin Starr, has caused to be established in five
22 locations throughout California high technology systems that
23 provide access to previously inaccessible material by use of a
24 standard telephone.



1 (f) These telephonic reading systems are currently
2 underutilized because they are capable of serving many more
3 people than can call without incurring long distance telephone
4 charges.

5 (g) It is not cost-effective to establish the hundreds of locations
6 necessary to give print disabled Californians local telephone call
7 access to those locations.

8 (h) Toll-free access to current and future telephonic reading
9 systems operated by governmental or nonprofit organizations in
10 California will provide meaningful access to this important print
11 material for all Californians with print disabilities.

12 SEC. 2. This bill may be known and shall be cited as the Kevin
13 Starr Access to Information Act of 2001.

14 SEC. 3. Section 19325 of the Education Code is amended to
15 read:

16 19325. The State Librarian may provide the following:

17 (a) Toll-free telephone services for registered patrons of the
18 federally designated regional libraries for the blind and physically
19 handicapped, in order to enable those persons to have direct patron
20 access to library services.

21 (b) Toll-free telephone access to telephonic reading systems for
22 individuals with print disabilities who are registered patrons of the
23 federally designated regional libraries for the blind and physically
24 handicapped.

25 SEC. 4. Section 19325.1 is added to the Education Code, to
26 read:

27 19325.1. (a) The State Librarian may operate a telephonic
28 reading system, fund the operation of telephonic reading systems
29 operated by qualifying entities, or both.

30 (b) As used in this section, the following terms have the
31 following meanings, unless otherwise indicated:

32 (1) “Telephonic reading system” means a system operated by
33 the State Librarian or a qualifying entity, whereby a caller can hear
34 the reading of material such as newspapers, magazines,
35 newsletters, broadcast media schedules, transit route and schedule
36 information, and other reference or time-sensitive materials, as
37 determined by the operator of the system.

38 (2) “Qualifying entity” means any agency, instrumentality, or
39 political subdivision of the state or any nonprofit organization

1 whose primary mission is to provide services to people who are
2 blind or visually impaired.

3 (c) Qualifying entities that were eligible, as of January 1, 2001,
4 to receive funds from the State Librarian relating to the operation
5 of a telephonic reading system may continue to receive funding
6 from the State Librarian.

7 (d) The State Librarian, in cooperation with qualifying entities,
8 may expand the type and scope of materials available on
9 telephonic reading systems in order to meet the local, regional, or
10 foreign language needs of print-disabled residents of this state.
11 The State Librarian may also expand the scope of services and
12 availability of telephonic reading services by current methods and
13 technologies or by methods and technologies that may be
14 developed. The State Librarian may inform current and potential
15 patrons of the availability of telephonic reading service through
16 appropriate means, including, but not limited to, direct mailings,
17 direct telephonic contact, and public service announcements.

18 (f) The State Librarian may enter into contracts or other
19 agreements that he or she determines to be appropriate to provide
20 telephonic reading services pursuant to this section.

21 SEC. 5. The sum of ~~two million dollars (\$2,000,000)~~ *eight*
22 *hundred thirty thousand dollars (\$830,000)* is hereby appropriated
23 from the California Teleconnect Fund Administrative Committee
24 Fund to the California State Library to fund the seven existing
25 telephonic reading centers in Los Angeles, San Diego, Fresno, San
26 Francisco, and Sacramento until July 1, 2002. Any funds
27 appropriated to the California State Library pursuant to this
28 section, which are not encumbered on or before July 1, 2002, shall
29 revert to the California Teleconnect Fund Administrative
30 Committee Fund.

